



Hazards found at industrial park

By SARAH GREENBLATT
STAFF WRITER

Federal officials said they will order a cleanup of businesses located within the Hamilton Industrial Park in South Plainfield after finding that contamination in some of the buildings poses a potential health hazard to workers.

SOUTH PLAINFIELD

Officials said levels of polychlorinated biphenyls — or PCBs — exceed federal standards in at least seven of the 15 businesses located on the contaminated site, which has been targeted for cleanup under the federal Superfund program.

"There is a potential health risk for workers in the buildings," said Eric Wilson of the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

To determine the full extent of contamination in and around the property, the agency plans to begin a study of potential environmental risks at the site next month, according to Wilson.

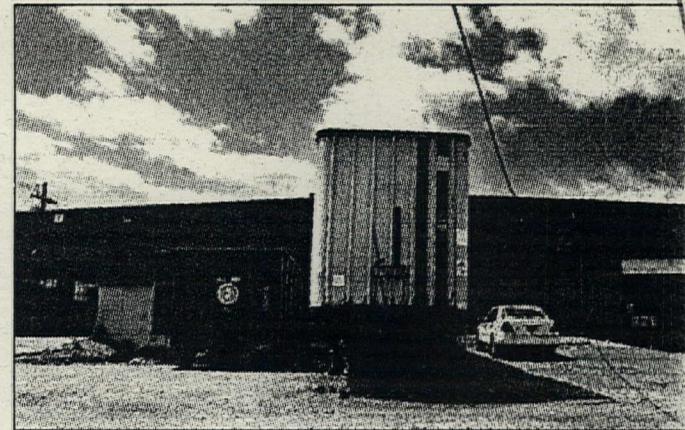
Until the building interiors are cleaned, Wilson said workers at the site can reduce the risk of exposure by wearing gloves, changing their clothes often and washing themselves carefully.

Wilson, who is coordinating cleanup efforts at the Hamilton Boulevard site, said that 27 "wipe tests" completed inside businesses on the property found that PCB levels in some places were "significantly above" EPA standards for interior surfaces.

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Staff graphic



MARK R. SULLIVAN/Staff photographer

● The EPA found high levels of PCBs inside of Columbia Products, left, and Robalo Enterprises yesterday in Hamilton Industrial Park.

Rutgers grads go out on a high note

Marsalis enlivens Piscataway ceremony

By LEO REISBERG
STAFF WRITER

Even with all of its ceremonial pomp and colorful pageantry, Rutgers University's 231st annual commencement was in danger of becoming ho-hum and predictable.

But leave it to Wynton Marsalis to jazz things up. One of six honorary-degree recipients, the Pulitzer-



JOE McLAUGHLIN
Staff photographer

● Lawrence Peacock smiles, above, while jazz composer Wynton Marsalis

'TAX CHEAT'

McGreevey apologizes to Murphy

By MARTHA McKAY
STAFF WRITER

Politesse and politics came together for a brief moment yesterday when gubernatorial hopeful James E. McGreevey apologized for calling one of his Democratic opponents a "tax cheat."

The Woodbridge mayor and state senator faxed his mea culpa to newsrooms two days after his campaign issued a fax labeling former Morris County Executive W. M.



JOE McLAUGHLIN/Staff photographer

Partners: JoAnn Pinkham of Potswood with her 18-month-old daughter Breann, whom she had dressed in a cap and gown, during yesterday's commencement ceremonies. Pinkham, who earned a master's in education, held her daughter through the ceremonies.

HAZARD: Buildings must be cleaned

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While federal guidelines call for a cleanup of surfaces that contain more than 10 micrograms of PCBs per 100 square centimeters, Wilson said test readings reached as high as 680 micrograms at some Hamilton Industrial Park businesses.

Several readings taken in two of the businesses were well over 100 micrograms, he said.

PCB exposure, which can occur through inhalation, skin contact and ingestion, has been found to irritate the eyes and skin, and damage the liver and immune system. The contaminant also is a suspected cancer-causing agent, according to information compiled by the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

PCBs are a group of industrial chemicals once widely used as coolants, insulating materials, and lubricants in electrical equipment such as transformers and capacitors.

Wilson said the preliminary results warrant further testing for PCBs, lead and cadmium inside businesses in the industrial park, the former site of Cornell-Dubilier Electronics, now owned by D.S.C. of Newark Enterprises.

"This indicates that there is a problem," he said, adding that two of the Hamilton Industrial Park businesses have not yet been tested. "We haven't completely characterized contamination within the buildings."

Having found high levels of PCBs, lead and cadmium in soil samples on the 25-acre site, the EPA already had ordered D.S.C. to pave a dirt roadway, install fences around the property and institute engineering controls to keep tainted runoff from spilling into an adjacent tributary of the Bound Brook.

An EPA report completed in January found that PCB levels in some soil samples were thousands of times higher than allowed under federal guidelines. The report also noted that electronic transformers, scattered on the site, are embossed with the name Cornell-Dubilier.

While there are some 500 homes within a quarter-mile of the industrial park, the report said the greatest health risk is to workers, who are exposed to dust stirred up from the heavily contaminated dirt roadway that traverses the site.

Because contamination has now been found inside businesses at the site, D.S.C. must add a cleanup of building interiors to its list of duties, Wilson said.

EPA spokesman Rich Cahill said the agency is currently reviewing a work plan that D.S.C. has proposed for containing contamination on the property, which could be placed on the agency's National Priorities List for more extensive cleanup.

Meanwhile, business owners and workers at the site say they are worried.


"Everybody, including myself, has expressed concerns," said Raul Nivez, owner of Columbia Products Inc., where high levels of PCBs were found. "We're waiting to hear when the cleanup will occur."

Nivez said he has encouraged his staff to wear dust masks while at work.

Robalo Enterprises owner A.J. DiLello said he is "reviewing his options" for moving his business to another location, adding EPA officials told him that PCB levels in the warehouse he rents are "very high."

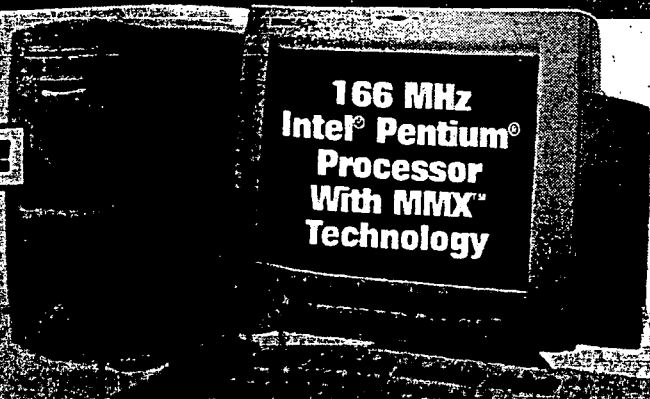
A worker who requested anonymity said not all business owners have advised employees of potential risks.

"We don't know anything," he said.



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